



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Recommendation Number: (20180323-001)

Recommendation for FY19 Budget Funding for the Downtown Austin Community Court

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) is to collaboratively address the quality of life issues of all residents in the downtown Austin community through the swift, creative sentencing of public order offenders. The Court seeks to hold people responsible while also offering help to change behavior; and

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the cases scheduled by the DACC Case Managers involve defendants who are experiencing homelessness. Since October 1, 2016, 7,986 cases were filed in the DACC. Three thousand five hundred and eighty five (3,585) of these cases involved 698 defendants experiencing homelessness, 45% of all the cases filed; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 7,500 individuals were homeless across Austin in calendar year 2017, and approximately 2,600 households are known to be homeless and seeking housing at this time; and

WHEREAS, the DACC is an integral part of the continuum of care provided by an array of local non-profits, and substance abuse and mental health providers. The DACC specializes in the criminal justice aspects of addressing the needs of and barriers facing these most vulnerable Austin citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Austin that cannot find housing or a safe place to spend the night without waiting days, or even weeks; and

WHEREAS, Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) is a coalition of service providers collaborating in an effort to address the urgent lack of shelter beds and housing; and

WHEREAS, ECHO is advocating with the City of Austin to dramatically increase resources to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, fewer people ended their homelessness in 2017 than in 2016 indicating community programs are running at capacity; and

WHEREAS, Since FY 2017, DACC's case managers have been unable to connect 118 individuals to these greatly needed programs and services due to service capacity ; and

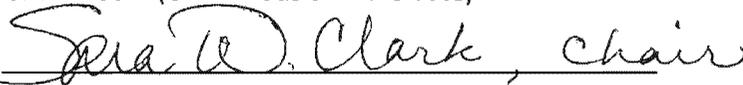
WHEREAS, the DACC has requested additional resources in order to meet the increasing demand for programs and services to assist Austin's most vulnerable citizens in stabilizing their lives to the benefit of the entire Austin community; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the DACC's request for additional funds to increase its case management capacity and housing resources to continue providing needed services to its clients and the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to fund solutions to address homelessness in Austin.

Date of Approval: March 23, 2018

Record of the vote: (Unanimous on a 7-0 vote)

Attest:

 Sara W. Clark, chair

(Staff or board member can sign)